



TV Turn-Off Week
April 20-26th, 2009

April, 2009

Unplug the Screen, Plug into Life!

On average, American kids spend about five hours per day in front of a screen for entertainment; including television, video games, and the Internet. This means that over the course of a year they spend more time in front of a screen than in school. In fact, 43 percent of children under the age of two are daily TV watchers.

The American Academy of Pediatrics recommends that children over the age of two spend no more than one or two hours a day in front of a screen. Children under the age of two should have no screen time.

These recommendations are designed to help parents and teachers decrease health and behavior problems that can seriously impact children's ability to learn and grow.

Children who watch more than the recommended amounts of television are more likely to:

- Have behavior issues like acting out in class
- Be overweight with the associated health problems
- Have decreased social skills

Entertainment such as television, games, and movies can be a great way to relax



Kids spend more time watching TV and playing video games than ever.

and have fun, but our children are using them too often, and for too long. Take some time to discuss your family's rules for television, computer, and video games. Turn off the screen and spend time as a family-they'll thank you for it.

Screen Time Facts About Kids:

Children who spend more than three hours in front of the television every day **18%**

Children who spend more than three hours a day playing video games (not school-work) **12%**

Percent of children nationwide who have a TV in their bedroom **36%**

Special points of interest:

- No more than 1-2 hours of "quality programming" is recommended for kids over age six, and 0 hours for kids under six
- Decreasing screen time by as little as an hour a day can improve health, lead to fewer behavioral problems, and better grades in children.

Tips to Decrease Screen Time With Your Family

Little changes can make a big difference. Try some of these tips to decrease screen time:

- During meal time, turning off the TV encourages everyone to eat and talk together
- Keep computers, TVs, and video game consoles out of bedrooms
- Don't use screen time as a reward
- Designate certain days of the week as screen-free days
- Avoid going cold turkey by making a plan for the amount of screen time you will use that week
- Identify the days you spend the most time in front of a screen, then decrease your time by 30 minutes those days
- Monitor and discuss the shows your children watch
- Plan alternative activities that allow everyone to be involved (see next page)

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Physical Activity, Nutrition, &
Obesity Program
P.O. Box 142107
Salt Lake City, UT 84114-2107

For More Information on Reducing
Screen Time, Contact Brett McIff,
Physical Activity Coordinator at
bmciff@utah.gov

*"TV." If kids are entertained by
these 2 letters, imagine the fun
they'll have with 26. Open your
child's imagination. Open a book.*
~Author Unknown

For more information, visit:

www.health.utah.gov/obesity



Utah
Department
of Health

Alternative Activities for Your Family

With the television and computer turned off, you may have a lot more time on your hands. Here are some ways to spend quality time with your family:

- Read a book together.
- Get outside; play catch, go for a walk, be active as a family.
- Check out your local recreation or community center. Many locations have family oriented classes and services.
- Attend a play or concert in your community.
- Plant a garden. Visit www.wasatchgardens.org for some ideas.
- Play a board game.
- Plan an active reward at the end of the week if you reach your goal of no screen time.
- Set up a scavenger/treasure hunt around your neighborhood or yard. The winner gets to pick the next game.
- Take some time to talk as a family.
- Whatever activity you choose, focus on having fun instead of winning or losing.
- Look up your local community calendar. You can find these in local newspapers or online. Most events are listed a month in advance.
- Visit a state or national park. Most parks have a Junior Ranger Program that will help kids learn more about their world.
- Visit www.familiesonlinemagazine.com/school/summer-fun-list.html to find more ideas of things to do- *139 Things To Do Besides Watch TV*.



Go ahead and get outside!